

Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center





Kentucky Injury Facts



Burn Awareness Week
February 4-10, 2001

January 2001

In recognition of **Burn Awareness Week**, we would like to this opportunity to address occupational burn injuries. The Occupational Burn Surveillance Project at KIPRC collects data on work-related burn injuries from participating medical facilities in Kentucky. Since data collection began in April 1998, we have collected data on 430 cases of workers who sought medical treatment for a burn injury.

- 72% (309) were male and 28% (121) were female
- 92% of the burns were treated on an outpatient basis, 7% required hospitalization and 1% were fatal.
- Age range was 14-69, with over one-third (37%) of the injuries occurring in the 20-29 age group.
- Most common types of burns: thermal 64%  chemical 16%  welding flash 12% 
electrical 5% 
- The occupation with the most injuries was food service workers, accounting for 30%. Burns in this occupation were most commonly caused by grease (38%), water/liquids (27%), food (12%) and grills/ovens (7%).



Our data show that inappropriate first aid treatments are often used for thermal burn injuries, such as vinegar, milk, cold pickle juice, butter, toothpaste, hot water and soap, and batter for frying food. Even though injury prevention is the primary goal, it is important for both supervisors and workers to know how to properly treat burn injuries when they do occur. In recognition of Burn Awareness Week, we would like to increase awareness of burn prevention as well as first aid.

First Aid for Minor Thermal Burn Injuries

- X The best first aid treatment for a thermal burn injury is to *flush the burned area with low pressure running cool water*.
- X Don't apply ice for prolonged periods— it can be too harsh for burned skin and cause tissue damage.
- X Cool water alone or a very mild soap can be used to gently clean the area.
- X "Folk remedies" such as applying butter do not help the healing process and may increase the risk of infection if the burn is severe.
- X Keep the burned area clean and dry as it heals. The area can be covered with a light bandage if needed and a small amount of an over-the-counter ointment can be applied to keep the bandage from sticking to the skin.
- X Seek medical treatment when a burn covers a large area or there is extreme pain or loss of sensation.

To request *First Aid for Burn Injuries* posters (8½ x 11) or other materials and information about the Occupational Burn Surveillance Project, contact Amy Scheerer at 859-257-6712 or alsche@pop.uky.edu.

Kentucky Injury Facts is an ongoing series which describes preventable injuries in the Commonwealth. This information can be used as a guide for injury prevention programs, legislative initiatives, and policy development to ensure the health and safety of Kentuckians. Please share this information with others who may benefit from it.

Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC)
University of Kentucky • Kentucky Department for Public Health
Visit our website at www.kiprc.uky.edu.